



United States Courts for the Ninth Circuit

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Editors: Still/video cameras allowed at event; photo of Judge Wallace available.

NEWS RELEASE

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Judge J. Clifford Wallace to Receive Prestigious Devitt Award for Judicial Service

SAN DIEGO – Senior Judge J. Clifford Wallace of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, a respected jurist, judicial administrator and international ambassador for the rule of law, will be honored next month in his hometown of San Diego by the respected American Judicature Society.

Judge Wallace will receive the society's 2005 Edward J. Devitt Distinguished Service to Justice Award at a special presentation on October 19, 2006, beginning at 4 p.m., at the Spreckels Theater in downtown San Diego. Civic leaders, members of the bar and fellow judges from the U.S. Court of Appeals and the U.S. District Court in San Diego, where Judge Wallace began his judicial career, are expected to attend along with the judge's family and many friends within the local community.

Associate Justice Anthony M. Kennedy of the Supreme Court of the United States will present the award, which recognizes "significant contributions to the administration of justice, the advancement of the rule of law, and the improvement of society as a whole." Justice Kennedy chaired a three-member panel that selected Judge Wallace for the award, which is generally regarded as the most prestigious honor conferred on a member of the federal judiciary.

The award presentation provides an opportunity to recognize the remarkable career of Judge Wallace, who has devoted more than 50 years to the law, most of them as a federal judge. Indeed, the event is being held almost 36 years to the day on which he received his judicial commission as a U.S. district judge in San Diego on October 16, 1970. Elevated to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in 1972, he served for 24 years as an active judge on the nation's largest federal appellate court, the last five in an executive role as chief circuit judge. Since taking semi-retired "senior status" in 1996, Judge Wallace has

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continued to hear appeals and fulfill other court duties, while finding time for increasing travel overseas to promote the rule of law in developing countries around the world.

In addition to significant contributions as a jurist, Judge Wallace has served with distinction in various administrative roles at the highest levels of the federal judiciary. He received appointments from two chief justices of the Supreme Court to serve on important committees of the Judicial Conference of the United States, the national governing body for the federal courts. His original idea and subsequent work with the late Chief Justice Warren E. Burger led to the establishment of the American Inns of Court, a national organization that now claims 75,000 members dedicated to excellence, civility, professionalism, and ethics in the practice of law. And as chief judge of the Ninth Circuit from 1991 to 1996, he organized the first federal task force to study racial, religious, ethnic and gender fairness within the court workforce and in the delivery of court services to the public.

Judge Wallace's support for the rule of law movement, which seeks to impart the concepts and ideals of an independent judiciary and impartial judicial system, dates back to 1972, when he began using personal vacation time to visit judiciaries overseas. Since taking senior status 10 years ago, he now spends about half his time on the effort. To date, he has worked directly with judiciaries in more than 50 countries on every continent. He currently chairs a Ninth Circuit committee focused on educational and training opportunities for judges and court staff in the island nations of the South Pacific and helped obtain significant federal funding for that effort from Congress.

This extensive work on behalf of the rule of law prompted the Devitt selection panel to note that Judge Wallace has "found new dimensions for the role of senior judge. ... He continues to perform this pioneering work not only as a student of the law and of judicial systems, but as a compassionate, concerned human being."

While renowned in national and international legal circles, Judge Wallace may be more familiar to San Diegans for his civic contributions and as an example of a local boy who made good despite adversity. Born in 1928, he grew up in a low income neighborhood on the city's southeast side. Family circumstances required him to work from an early age and he held a variety of jobs before entering the Navy in 1946. After an honorable discharge from military service, he enrolled at San Diego State University, graduating in 1952 with honors and distinction. He went on to receive his LL.B. in 1955 from the University of California Boalt Hall School of Law, where he served on the California Law Review. He joined a San Diego law firm, where he specialized in civil trial matters

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and later became a partner. He remained in private practice until his nomination to the federal court by President Nixon in 1970.

In the local community, Judge Wallace has a long affiliation with the Boy Scouts of America, serving on the local chapter's board of directors and executive committee from 1977 to 1993, during which he co-chaired a committee to develop scouting in African-American and Hispanic San Diego communities. A Mormon, he has been active in the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints, serving in local and regional governing posts. He also was vice president of the San Diego County Bar Association and a member of the county nominating committee for the Red Cross.

The American Judicature Society, founded in 1913, is an independent, national, nonpartisan organization of judges, lawyers, and other members of the public who seek to improve the justice system. AJS, which brings a public perspective to justice system issues, has the mission to secure and promote an independent and qualified judiciary and fair system of justice. The Edward J. Devitt Distinguished Service to Justice Award is named for the late Edward J. Devitt, longtime chief judge of the U.S. District Court for the District of Minnesota. The annual award includes \$15,000 and is symbolized by a crystal obelisk, which will be presented by Justice Kennedy at the event.

For more information about the award and presentation, please contact: Allen Haynie, (619) 236-1234, or John Owens, (619) 557-5629

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